



MONGOLIA



VALUES OF SIILKHEM NURUU NATIONAL PARK

SIILKHEM NURUU NATIONAL PARK

Year of establishment: The State Ikh Khural (The Parliament) Resolution No.29 in 2000;

Area: 147.641 hectares; Parts “A” and “B”.

Part “A”: 69.576 hectares;

Part “B”: 78.065 hectares

PROTECTION VALUES OF THE AREA:

- It has specific ecosystem features and lies in Altai Say-an Eco-Region, one of the 35 ecosystems identified by WWF as priority global conservation;
- It is a home to the globally and nationally endangered wildlife species such as snow leopard, Argali sheep, and Siberian ibex;
- In particular, it is a core distribution area for Argali sheep;
- It is very rich in historical and cultural monuments and
- It has naturally beautiful unique formations.



THE NATIONAL PARK IS IN TERRITORIES OF ULAANKHUS AND NOGOONNUUR SOUMS (SUB-PROVINCES) OF BAYAN-ULGII AIMAG (PROVINCE) STRETCHED ALONG THE ALTITUDE AT THE STATE BORDER.

JUSTIFICATION:

The area is taken under state protection to ensure the ecosystem balance through protection of very rare and rare wildlife habitats and historical and cultural monuments and develop community based eco-tourism.

Legend

- State border
- Core zone
- Tourism zone
- Limited zone



According to the natural zone classifications, the most of the Range lie in the dry steppe supporting rounded Siilkhem-Kharkhiraa Mountain and depression, while the western part of Sillhem Range is in the mountain meadow and mountain steppe supporting the alpine, rounded Tavan Bogd Mountain, and mountainous depression.

Siilkhem Range has quite uneven, cut, rocky, steep slopes and moderately sharpened tops in the west and a small larch forest stand near Asgat at its easternmost end, which is dominant by steppe plants. In addition, the easternmost end of the Range is abundant by the medicinal plants such as *Saussurea involucre* and *Adonis Mongolica* and represents the mountainous region, which are a core distribution area for the endangered wildlife species such as Snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*), Argali sheep (*Ovis ammon*), and Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*). As such, Siilkhem Range is highly specific with its natural formation and has high protection values.



ARGALI SHEEP

Ovis ammon Linnaeus, 1758

Order. Artiodactyla
Family. Bovidae



PROTECTION STATUS:

- ✓ According to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, its global status is “vulnerable” and its regional status is “endangered”.
- ✓ In Mongolia, its hunting has been prohibited since 1953 and it is included in the List of Rare Wild Species according to the Government Resolution No. 7 in 2012.
- ✓ It is listed in the Red Book of Mongolia (Editions: 1987, 1997, and 2013).
- ✓ It is included in Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).



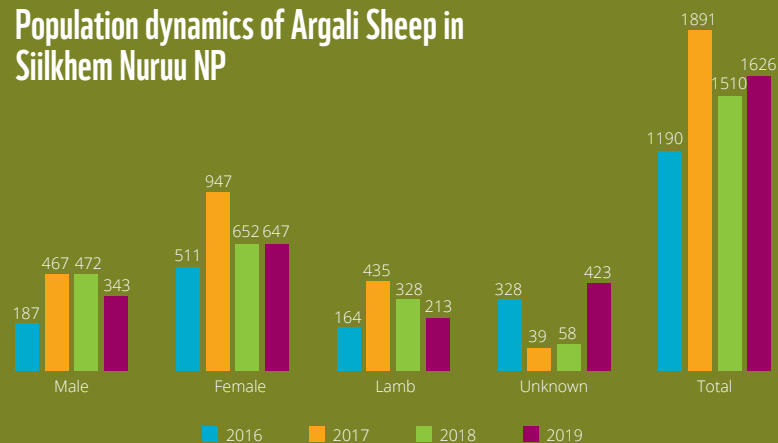
Argali sheep population inhabits in part “A” of Siilkhem Nuruu NP and mostly moves into the Russian territory in summers crossed over the state border. In autumns and winters, the species population comes back into the Mongolian territory in different herd sizes.

WWF in cooperation with Saylyugem National Park in the Russian Federation conducts inventory on Argali sheep populations in trans-boundary areas every two year. According to the recent inventory data, the Argali sheep population has been increasing within the Mongolian and Russian border zones thanks to the multifaceted conservation actions undertaken within the species distribution ranges.



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Population dynamics of Argali Sheep in Siilkhem Nuruu NP





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For a monitoring purpose, cameras were installed in 670 км² in part “B” of Siilkhem Nuruu NP. According to the camera image captures, there were 10 snow leopard individuals (95%CI=8-21) recorded with 1.4 heads per 100 км² (95%CI=1.1-2.9). The population size was slightly increased in 2017 when compared to the 2010 baseline monitoring results, where the species population was recorded as nine within the designated area.

SNOW LEOPARD

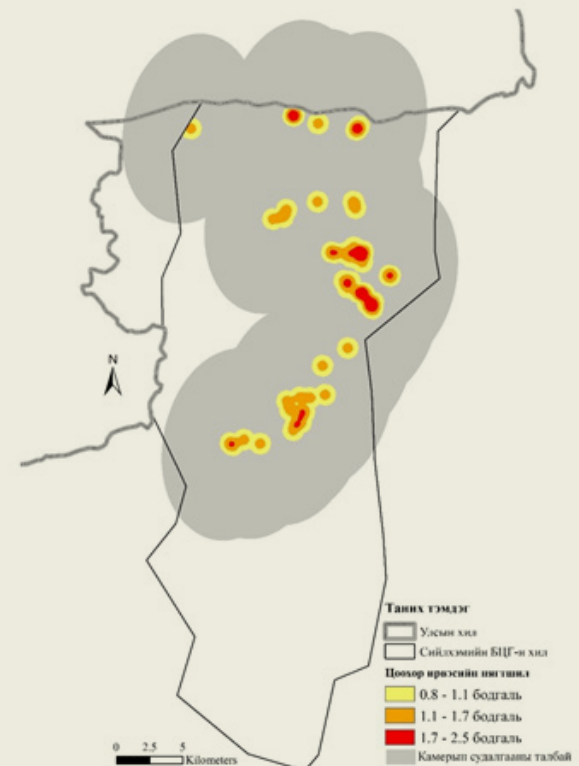
Panthera uncia Schreber, 1775

Order. Carnivora
Family. Felidae

PROTECTION STATUS:

- ✔ According to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, its global status is “endangered” and its regional status is “threatened”.
- ✔ It is listed in the Red Book of Mongolia (Editions: 1987, 1997, and 2013).
- ✔ It is included in Appendix I of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
- ✔ It is included in Appendix I of Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).
- ✔ In the country, hunting of snow leopard has been legally banned since 1972 and is protected as Very Rare Species under the Law of Mongolia on Fauna (2000).

Distribution of snow leopards in part “B” of Siilkhem Nuruu NP



ALTAI MARMOT

Marmota baibacina

Order: Rodentia
Family: Sciuridae



Altai marmot is distributed in Xinjiang, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Altai Range, and Siberia. Although its global and regional populations are not threatened for now, the species plays a special role in maintaining the steppe ecosystem balance. Thus, the Altai marmot is selected as one of the wildlife species of priority conservation for Siilkhem Nuruu NP.



According to the 2015 inventory results, there were 246,758 heads of Altai marmot distributed within 483,840 ha of territory of Ulaankhus soum (sub-province) of Bayan-Ulgii aimag (province). If Altai marmot is distributed at 80-90% of 62,839.4 ha of the soum, which is the limited-use and buffer zone of Siilkhem Nuruu NP part "A", the species population in the NP is estimated at 54,293 with an average of 8-10 individuals per a family and 6-17 /~11,5/ in the highest density areas within the study areas.





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Siberian ibex regularly inhabits in the areas such as Khargait, Khuurait, Nariin Gol, and Asgat in part "B" of Siilkhem Nuruu NP. Sometimes, the species moves into territory of the Russian Federation for grazing. Inventory results show the highest density: 1600-1800 individuals (in repeated numbers) of Siberian ibex per one hectare of Siilkhem Nuruu NP.



Herd structure of the species population has been lost due to competition for water and grazing accesses with domestic livestock herds, harsh winter conditions, and illegal hunting.

SIBERIAN IBEX

Capra Sibirica Pallas, 1776

Order. Artiodactyla
Family. Bovidae



PROTECTION STATUS:

- ✓ According to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, its global status is "least concern" and its regional status is "near threatened".
- ✓ It is included in the List of Rare Wild Species according to the Government Resolution No. 7 in 2013 under the Law of Mongolia on Fauna.



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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL MONUMENTS



Petroglyphic Complexes of Mongol Altai Range include three rock art sites (covering a total of 11,300 ha) in Aral Tolgoi and Shiveet Khairkhan in Tsengel soum territory and Tsagaan Salaa-Baga Oigar in Ulaankhus soum territory in Bayan-Ulgii aimag. These sites are the second major properties in Mongolia registered in the World Heritage as a cultural site.

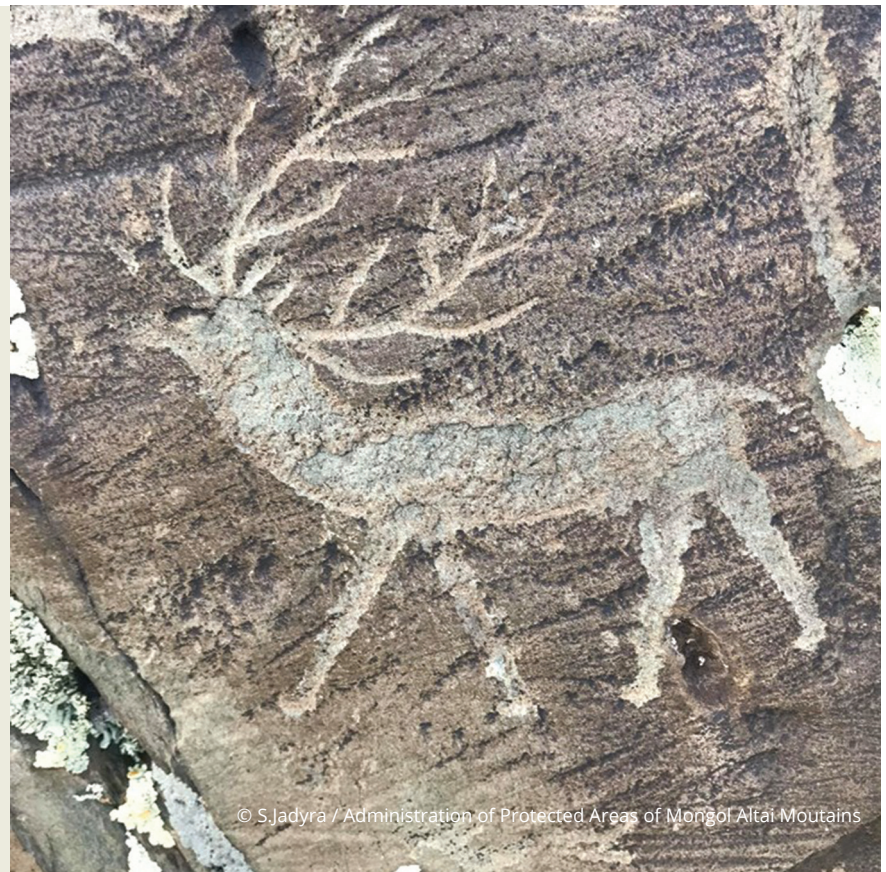
In 1994, these rock arts and carvings were first discovered by a team of researchers from the Institute of History at the Mongolian Academy of Sciences (MAS), the University of Oregon, the USA, and the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography at Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences under a joint research project "Altai". Since its discovery, these rock arts complexes have become one of major scientific research sites for pre-historic communities in the region.



THE ROCK ARTS COMPLEXES IN TSAGAAN SALAA-BAGA OIGAR IN SIILKHEM NURUU NATIONAL PARK ARE A PART OF THE PETROGLYPHIC COMPLEXES OF MONGOL ALTAI MOUNTAIN RANGE. THE COMPLEXES WERE REGISTERED IN THE UNESCO'S WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE IN 2011.



The rock carvings and arts are the valuable historical and cultural heritages dated back to 2500-3000 years ago. Deer stones of Altai Range are quite different from those of Khangai Mountain Range because they were made of gray colored granite and images of big sun and small moon and some arrows shooting into the sun were carved on their front sides. However, there are mostly horse images instead of deer images and horse and sword stones abundant on Altay Range. In addition to the descriptions aforesaid, deer stones on Mongol Altay are specific with that some stones are plain or have one or two carved stamps or standing individually or separately. The deer stones are dated back to the VII-V centuries B.C. Moreover, Mongol Altay Range is abundant by the rectangular graves dated back to the periods started from Skiff to Hunnu and the burial sites and graves dated back to Hunnu, Tureg, Uigar, and Mongolian Empires and indefinite periods.



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IN TERMS OF CHRONOLOGY, THE MONUMENTS BELONG TO B.C. VII-V CENTURIES.

In terms of their covering areas, quantities, sizes, and scientific, historical, and cultural values, and imageries, the rock arts, are recognized as major properties amongst the similar types of monuments. This recognition is fully accepted and agreed by international researchers and explorers.



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ROCK CARVINGS AND ARTS IN TSAGAAN SALAA-BAGA OIGOR

Located in valleys of Baga Oigor River and its tributary "Tsagaan Salaa River, the rock arts complexes are about 20 km long and about 400 m high.

The complexes lie in a territory of Ulaankhus soum at 140 km in the northwest from Bayan-Ulgii aimag's center. Main protected area and protection zone around the complexes are 2100 hectares and 3,600 hectares, respectively.

The rock arts complexes are registered and marked as 10 sections: 1 to 5 sections in Tsagaan Salaa and 1 to 5 sections in Baga Oigor. According to the researchers, there are 1-180 images and scenes carved on tops or surfaces of about 2000 big rocks and boulders and there are 75 000-100 000 images and scenes recorded within the rock arts complexes.

Rock arts complexes in Tsagaan Salaa –Baga Oigor are dated back to the Stone Age (40-12,000 years ago from now), the Bronze and Early Iron Ages (4-2 000 years ago from now), and Tureg and Uigur Periods (1400-1200 years ago from now). However, most of the rock arts are dated back to the Bronze and Early Iron Ages. The rock arts and carvings dated back to the Bronze Age contain a variety of human life images and scenes including domesticated animals, massive hunting of animals, and the humans loading on backs of cattle, leading caravans, and human reproduction in unit areas. There are numerous images of cattle in rock arts complexes in Tsagaan Salaa–Baga Oigor and the cattle occupied an important position. In the cattle images, their heads, horns, bodies, and tails were added by the sun; presumably the cattle was symbolized as a holy animal. Furthermore, scenes with cattle include the human leading, riding, loading, and hunting cattle. Loads on back of cattle also vary and are of different shapes. For instance, there are images of children sitting in loads on cattle backs and long straight lines over the loads. Overall, these images are significant historical and cultural evidences reflected economic, customary, intellectual, and cultural aspects of ancient inhabitants.





COOPERATION

Buffer Zone Councils local self-governing bodies, and Governor's Offices of Ulaankhus and Nogoonnur soums located in Siilkhem Range NP's buffer zone do cooperate in the environmental conservation encouraged active participation of local community and non-governmental organizations and residents.



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Siilkhem Nuruu NP is located along the Mongolian and Russian borders and border strip zone. In this location, wildlife populations regularly move in and out through the state border.

Siilkhem Range meets Saylyugem National Park in the Russian Federation. These adjacent NPs in neighboring countries do play an important role in keeping the ecosystem balance and provides for a basis for establishment of trans-boundary international Protected Area. Therefore, the park administrations are willing to expand their cooperation for improved conservation management in the trans-boundary areas through experience sharing in wildlife research and monitoring, patrolling, and the park management.





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